DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 037 478 TE 500 598

AUTHOR	Homan, Delmar C.
TITLE	Innovations in English at Bethany College.
INSTITUTION	Kansas Association of Teachers of English, Chanute.
PUB DATE	Feb 69
NOTE	4p.
JOURNAL CIT	Bulletin of the Kansas Association of English Teachers; v54 n3 p3-6 Feb 1969
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	American Literature, Bachelors Degrees, College Curriculum, Comedy, Composition (Literary), Composition Skills (Literary), *Curriculum Development, Curriculum Planning, *Degree Requirements, English Departments, *English Instruction, *English Literature, Epics, Literature, Romanticism, Satire, Tragedy, *Undergraduate Study
IDENTIFIERS	Bethany College

ABSTRACT

Curriculum reform begun in January 1968 in the English department at Bethany College (Lindsborg, Kansas) is detailed in this article. New offerings feature three "mode" courses: (1) the Romance-Epic, (2) the Comic and Satiric, and (3) the Tragic. Two new majors, the English major and the English teaching major, are examined; degree requirements for both are stated. (RL)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED037478

TE 500 598

INNOVATIONS IN ENGLISH AT BETHANY COLLEGE

Delmar C. Homan
Bethany College
Lindsborg, Kansas

The drive toward curriculum reform at Bethany College (Lindsborg, Kansas) came at an opportune time for the English department. In March of 1967 Dr. Larzer Ziff, NCTE Distinguished Lecturer, presented his lecture at Bethany on "My Country, Write or Wrong" (now published by NCTE in **The Shape of English**), in which he advocated teaching English and American literature together in order to present the greatest works of both, not merely the literature of a country. In October 1967, the "Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English" were published. By January 1968, the English department was being given the opportunity to revise its courses and its majors as it wished within a general framework set up by the Faculty Curriculum Committee.

I
New Courses

Within the new core curriculum, planned for a 4-1-4 schedule, one first-level freshman English was allowed, to be taught a recommended five days a week in a fourteen-week semester. A second course in the core was to be a second-level (sophomore) literature course, to be taught the more usual four days a week. Those who test out of Freshman English will enroll in the literature course for their first English course and will meet their composition requirement later with Advanced Composition.

Condensing two three-hour semesters of Freshman English into one five-hour semester posed some problems. The goal of the course for literature had been to teach the student close reading of a text, i.e., what he can expect to find by looking at the text itself, along the lines of the "New Criticism." This goal has been retained, along with most of the short stories and poetry but with a sharp and almost complete reduction in drama. What is learned about plot, character, and theme in fiction will be carried into the study

From: Bulletin of the Kansas Association of Teachers of English
Series LIV, No. 3 Chanute, Kansas, February, 1969 $2.00 a Year, Copies 50c

of drama in each second-level course. Most if not all the rhetoric has been retained. Of course the total number of papers has been decreased, but the number for the semester has been slightly increased over the number for one of the former three-hour semesters, with the goal now ten to twelve, including at least one thousand-word paper and the final.

Condensing two three-hour semesters in American Literature, English Literature, and World Literature seemed an impossible task. Articles published in past years from other colleges concerning expermental curricula, as well as some experience with the way the old sophomore courses had developed, suggested an approach different from the historical. The new approach chosen, which also provided a mixture of English, American, and other, literature, introduces literature through modes. Three courses were established: the Romance-Epic Mode, the Comic and Satiric Modes, and the Tragic Mode. The goal for each course is to present the mode or modes as clearly as possible. Each course will make use of examples from the whole range of literature and will provide comparison with one other mode through reading of at least one text in that other mode and possibly through guest lectures by staff members who are teaching other mode courses. The range of texts, though not the proportions of different literatures, can be suggested by this incomplete list of texts in the Romance-Epic Mode course: **The Odyssey, Beowulf, Song of Roland, Tristan and Isolt, Perceval, Divine Comedy, Paradise Lost, Huckleberry Finn, Winter's Tale** and **Hamlet.** Time for composition in these one-semester courses will be more restricted than in the two three-hour semesters, but writing will still be sufficient to reinforce the level of achievement gained in Freshman English.

All other courses were to be third-level courses. In keeping with Dr. Ziff's suggestion, the department designed three literature courses in English and American Masterpieces: Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries, the Romantic Movement, and Later Nineteenth Century. The two literatures also are found in the courses in English and American Novel, Twentieth Century Fiction, and Twentieth Century Poetry. Courses obviously unaffected by Dr. Ziff's proposal are Chaucer and the Middle Ages, Shakespeare, and Modern World Masterpieces I and II (chiefly continental literature from the seventeenth century to the present). The third-level course in composition and language is Advanced Composition, with the course in Studies in Rhetoric available in Speech.

During the interterm, courses may be given which are not regularly found in the catalogue but which will ordinarily substitute for catalogue courses. For instance, this year a special honors section of sophomore literature was developed. It was limited to those who were excused from Freshman English or who received A's or B's in that course, although these students were not required to take it. This course, providing examples from many modes, emphasized various critical approaches to literature. For majors who took it, it substituted for the course in the Tragic Mode. A film seminar was also available this year; it substituted in the drama department for the course in the Art of Drama, which may meet a requirement in the English majors. In future years other courses will be developed as the teachers and students wish, perhaps even to include field studies in England.

II

New Majors and Rationales for Them

Two majors were devised: one called the English major, and the other, the English teaching major. According to the general curriculum framework, these majors include supporting courses in other fields as well as courses in English. English and supporting courses vary somewhat in the two majors because of their different purposes. The student majoring in English may go on to graduate study or to any work requiring a liberal arts major, whereas the student in the English teaching major will be prepared especially for high school teaching.

Both majors require the three mode courses, one of which meets the core literature requirement. Also required in both are Advanced Composition, Chaucer and the Middle Ages, and Shakespeare. The

English major also requires the Romantic Movement, since that period seems a divide in literary history and influences, and two other courses, one to be chosen from one of the other courses in English and American Masterpieces or the novel course, and the other to be chosen from the remainder of the courses offered.

Supporting courses for the English major include a choice between the history of Medieval Europe and of England Since 1715, with the history of the United States to be taken to meet the history core requirement; one course in Speech or Drama; a third course in a foreign language (beyond the two required in the core); and either the fourth and fifth courses in the same language or two courses in the history of philosophy.

Besides the English courses required in common, the English teaching major has three additional courses: the Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries course or a course in linguistics if available (especially at one of the other schools in the consortium of which Bethany is a part), the Romantic Movement or the Later Nineteenth Century course, and the novel or one of the twentieth century courses. Supporting courses for this major include the same history requirements, the third course of a foreign language, the course in Oral Interpretation and Acting, and a choice of Studies in Rhetoric or the Art of Drama. Professional education courses include two in practice teaching and one each in Psychological and Sociological Foundations, Methods, Educational Psychology, and Educational Sociology.

Both majors were designed to provide strong liberal arts degrees. Under the new general curriculum, core requirements other than those already noted (Freshman English, history, and foreign language) include philosophy, music, art, biology, mathematics, physical science, behavioral science, religion, and physical education. This core is strengthened by additional foreign language and history. The added language helps students gain minimum competence in use of the language; the history gives background for literature in addition to providing its own values. The student majoring in English has the opportunity to approach the four years of language suggested in many of the modern Ph.D. programs (especially if he uses one of his electives for a sixth course) or to add a knowledge of the history of philosophy to support his knowledge of literature.

Both majors require courses in Chaucer and Shakespeare; these two authors, central to English literature, are important in later teaching or study, and both courses give the student knowledge of the changing language. Advanced Composition teaches not only the necessary writing but also at least a basic vocabulary for linguistics and an introduction to history of the language. The student in the English teaching major also gains added insight into the language in the course in the Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries or the linguistics course, as well as additional understanding of literature in the former course. He also has one other period course that leads to modern literature and one course in modern literature itself, both recommended in the guidelines for English teachers. The student in the English major also has two period courses but has opportunity to study continental as well as English and American literature. The English major includes six electives, at least part of which may be additional literature courses; the English teaching major has fewer electives because of the professional education courses.

The speech or drama course for the English major emphasizes needed speaking and listening skills. The English teaching major requires the course in Oral Interpretation and Acting because of the student's need to be able to read literature effectively in class (not merely to play records) and his possible need to direct plays as well as speech activities. The student's option in theatre will provide background for dramatic literature and for directing plays; his option in classical rhetoric helps especially in teaching composition and in understanding rhetorical theory behind such teaching.

The sequence of courses in literature, a special feature of these majors, is the movement from close reading of the text in Freshman English to an understanding of the modes of writing and an overview of literature in the second-level courses

to the study of major authors and periods in the history of literature. The higher-level courses will build upon the knowledge gained at the lower levels and will also allow for historical and other critical approaches and for introduction to bibliographical methods and research.

The sequence of courses in language and composition moves similarly from fundamentals (in composition, speech, and foreign language) to more advanced work in writing, history of the language, and linguistics (in the Advanced Composition course and to some extent is most of the literature courses).

In addition to these majors, the department was asked to devise a five-course concentration in English for elementary education majors who wish to elect it. The Romance-Epic mode course meets the core requirement and is required for these students because of its closeness to Children's Literature. One of the other two mode courses is the first course required in the concentration itself. These mode courses will give a wide range of literature as well as an understanding of a number of modes. Since the student needs to study one author in depth, he may choose Shakespeare if he chooses the course in the Comic and Satiric Modes (thereby gaining some exposure to the tragic mode in literature), and he may choose Chaucer if he chooses the Tragic Mode (thereby gaining some exposure to the comic and satiric modes). The choice of the Romantic Movement or the Later Nineteenth Century as the third requirement provides study of a period as well as of English and American literature in some depth, and also provides background for contemporary literature. The choice of Twentieth Century Fiction or Twentieth Century Poetry provides the recommended study of contemporary literature as well as more English and American literature. Advanced Composition, now required of all elementary education majors no matter what their concentration, meets the requirement of the fifth course. The other mode course and the course in the Art of Drama are recommended electives.

These are the plans that were put into operation in the fall of 1968 and that affect this year's freshmen. Some problems already seem to be solved. Transfers from junior colleges with English or American literature courses or other courses in introduction to literature will be given credit for sophomore literature, and English major transfers may make some use of the "Special Assignment" method to take work in the literature that they lack. A Kansas requirement of a course in American literature for a teacher of English has been met by approval of the program as established, which includes American literature in at least two required period courses besides the mode courses. Other problems will be worked out as the department carefully plans the texts to be taught in the various courses, as each teacher learns which basic principles are taught by other teachers, especially in the mode courses, and as each teacher moves into new fields. The courses and major programs will now be tested; they should help provide a quality liberal arts education along with a stimulating experience for teachers as well as students.